

BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

WORK SESSION

Thursday, December 16, 2010
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

The Rhode Island Department of Education – Shepard Building
5th Floor – Peter McWalters Conference Room
255 Westminster St. – Providence, RI 02903

MINUTES

Attending: R. Flanders, P. Guida, C. Callahan, B. Shimberg, A. Beretta, A. Davis, A. Cano-Morales [Vice Chair Patrick Guida chaired the meeting until Chairman Flanders arrived at 12:30 p.m.]

The meeting convened at 11:30 a.m.

Commissioner's Comments

Update on RTTT – Commissioner Gist report that the US Department of Education (USED) provided feedback on December 9 on the Department's scope of work (SOW) for Race to the Top, as follows:

(a) The SOW was well organized and easy to follow and specific questions regarding adjustments in timelines were clarified; and

(b) the Department was asked to revise the SOW by adding the NAEP goals, providing a written description of the process that will be used with LEAs for revising and planning for years 2-4, and providing a written description of how the Department will work with USED on progress monitoring, fidelity of implementation, and seeking appropriate approvals for specific changes.

The Department has made the requested changes and has sent a revised SOW to USED.

Two additional RTTT positions were filled: Curriculum Specialist and Educator Quality Specialist. More intensive recruitment and advertising is being done for other positions. Additionally, the Department is developing a program and fiscal monitoring plan for submission to USED in mid-February, is continuing the development of Request for Proposals to support systems of support, and is working out the process for LEAs to access RTTT funding via the Accelegrants management system.

Update on Educator Evaluation System – The Department has just completed phase one of the design work on the Educator Evaluation System. This means that a complete model that is ready for field testing is available. Portsmouth is going to field test and hopefully, the Department will also be working with Providence and

Cranston. The AFT Innovation model will also be field tested during this same time period. Information from both models will be used to revise the models into one merged effort. Training will begin in late spring and will go through the summer.

Trustee members for Central Falls and MET School – Commissioner Gist informed the members of the Board that the Central Falls Board of Trustees and the MET School Trustees have requested that the Regents approve new members to their Boards. We have already received one of the names from the Central Falls Board, Cheryl Lafond. She is a resident of Central Falls and has children in the system. The nominee for the Met School Board is Gina Wesley-Silva. She is the parent of a MET School student and has a long association with television, entertainment, and journalism. She will replace Rosa Morales. The names will be brought forward for approval at the January 6 Board meeting.

UCOA Update - Commissioner Gist reminded the members of the Board that over the past three years the Department has been working diligently with school districts and the Auditor General and his staff creating and implementing the statewide Uniform Chart of Accounts that was mandated by the General Assembly. This statewide chart will be used in the day-to-day accounting in local school districts to track not only the revenues flowing to school districts, but also how those funds are expended. FY10 financial data in UCOA format has been received from all 52 districts and charter schools, and an intensive quality-assurance process is under way to ensure the consistency and comparability of this first-year data. The Department anticipates that the first set of UCOA financial data will be available in early February. This significant reform will provide an unprecedented level of transparency in financial data and will result in data that can be used to inform decisions at multiple levels.

Update on Lowest Achieving Schools –

Re: Providence: David Abbott reported that the Department has been working closely with the Legal office at USED on the Providence SIG application, specifically on the question of whether the “United Providence” compact meets the definition of an “education management organization” (EMO) for the purpose of Restart. The Department concluded that it does, but will need additional information before being able to grant final approval. The situation is further complicated because of the overlap with the federal lawsuit arising from the Commissioner’s order from February 2009 that dis-allowed bumping and required new evaluation systems.

Re: Central Falls: Commissioner Gist reported that she had met with students, teachers, and leadership of the Central Falls High school and district, and the work of addressing the areas of concern is ongoing. She emphasized that she has sent clear messages that she believes in the capacity of every child at CFHS to achieve at high levels and that she has confidence in the leadership of the district and the school to lead this work. The school is currently supported by a number

of external partners, including Mass Insight, a nationally recognized leader in the area of school transformation. The Regents discussed the Calcutt School and the need to provide leadership to *all* Central Falls students, parents, and teachers (not just those at the high school). They also talked about the teacher-absentee numbers being reported in the media.

Review of Changes to High School Graduation Requirements

The Commissioner reminded the Regents that this is the Board's second review of proposed High School regulatory language. She then reviewed the preliminary agreements that led to the proposed language:

- a. First, the Regents agreed at the December 16 work session that Rhode Island's multiple-measure design is intended to be conjunctive, not compensatory. This approach means that all three requirements (coursework, performance-based assessments, and the state assessments) will have equal importance and weight for the purpose of determining graduation eligibility.
- b. Second, it was agreed that it was very important to maintain high expectations for all students; however it was recognized that there is a need to have a flexible, rather than an absolute, requirement for student performance on the NECAP. Therefore, it was agreed that a NECAP retake opportunity that focuses on growth as a means of students' demonstrating their eligibility for a diploma should be incorporated.
- c. Third, it was agreed that the Regents intend to establish a series of differentiated diplomas that simultaneously raise the expectations for all students and create the opportunity for students performing at academically high levels to be recognized for their achievement; and
- d. Finally, it was agreed that staff was asked to write regulations that reflect these agreements. This is the document that will be reviewed today, for the second time.

Andrea Castañeda joined the group at the table to review the document that includes additional revisions: expansion of the system elements that will be established and managed by the BOR, clarification of the content areas that will be incorporated into the multiple-measure system through the state assessments, clarification of the appeals process, the addition of clear requirements for the use of an early-warning system, and the adoption of minor language changes to make the regulations more clear, concise, and comprehensible.

Update on Funding Formula

Commissioner Gist reported that since the Regents last update, the Department has completed preliminary calculations based on the Regents' FY 2012 budget submission, submitted the required report to the General Assembly on November 15, and completed extensive analysis of the local impact related to the implementation of a "money follows the student" methodology. She noted that in most cases the state revenue changes more than offset the local tuition changes, however, Central Falls is the one exception. The Department will work closely with this district to develop a long-range plan to ensure that there is appropriate funding for all public-school children from this community.

As per RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1), the meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m. into Executive Session.

The meeting reconvened to open session at 1:35 p.m.

Chairman Flanders reported that during Executive Session the members of the Board of Regents had approved the proposed Executive Pay Plan as follows:

RECOMMENDATION: THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approves the attached proposed Executive Pay Plan and the Proposal to replace the across-the-board salary increases, scheduled for January 2, 2011 and June 21, 2011 for non-classified employees at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, who work outside the provisions of a collective bargaining unit with a distribution method based on COLA, performance and other employment status as determined by the Commissioner.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT, the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approves a budget article that will eliminate prospective longevity payments for non-classified, non-union personnel.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.